



Washington State Department of Agriculture *Hearing Notice*

For immediate release: Jan. 23, 2003 (03-05)

Contact: Erik Johansen (360) 902-2078
Mike Louisell (360) 902-1813

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, Washington 98504-2560

Yakima hearing slated Feb. 4

WSDA proposes to protect bees by restricting insecticide on fruit trees

OLYMPIA – To protect honeybees, the state Department of Agriculture (WSDA) proposes rules restricting the use of thiamethoxam, an insecticide sold under the trade name Actara, that is used on fruit trees. The proposed rules are identical to revisions the manufacturer of Actara has submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). If adopted, the rule will define the growth stages when the insecticide can be used, restrict placement of beehives on trees until at least five days after application, and require control of blooming weeds prior to application. Public comment on the proposal will be heard at 6 p.m. Feb. 4 in the second floor conference room of WSDA, 21 N First Ave. in Yakima. The deadline for comments is 5 p.m. Feb. 5.

The proposed rule is intended to serve two purposes. First, it will regulate existing Actara supplies that do not have the new label language. Second, it will ensure rules are in place if supplies of newly labeled Actara are not available when they are needed in early spring. EPA approval of the revised label is expected later this year.

“Honeybees are essential for the pollination of tree fruits, and they are very susceptible to this pesticide,” says Erik Johansen, WSDA Pesticide Registration specialist. “Our proposal protects bees while allowing the use of an insecticide that is needed to control pear psylla.” Related to aphids, pear psylla are a significant pest of pears in Washington.

Last year, WSDA investigated 11 reports of honeybee kills that appear to be related to the use of the Actara on fruit trees, especially pears. Actara is highly toxic to honeybees and it leaves a residue that remains toxic for several days after application.

WSDA is not proposing any restrictions that would prohibit the use of thiamethoxam on fruit trees.

For a copy of the proposed rules, call Laurie Mauerman at (360) 902-2012. Send written comments to: Washington State Department of Agriculture, Pesticide Management Division, P.O. Box 42589, Olympia, WA 98504-2589. Comments may also be sent by FAX to (360) 902-2093, or by e-mail to lmauerman@agr.wa.gov.

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